13
ALIVE
The Final Evolution
STORY BY TADASHI KAWASHIMA
ART BY ADACHITOKA

ALIVE

THE FINAL EVOLUTION

We are alive on this planet, and they arrived...

13

STORY / TADASHI KAWASHIMA
ART / ADACHITOKA



McPherson, SFC;
SERGEANT FIRST-CLASS AND MEMBER OF THE SPECIAL FORCES ASSIGNED TO GUARD ACRO'S HEART.



D2



D3



D4

MCPHERSON'S SUBORDINATES BELONGING TO THE SPECIAL FORCES. NO INFORMATION ASIDE FROM THEIR CODE NAMES.



Dr. Horner
DR. KYLE HORNER
A PROFESSOR RESEARCHING ACRO'S HEART. A GENIUS WITH A PECULIAR PERSONALITY.



Captain
A NAVY CAPTAIN IN CHARGE OF ALL PROCEEDINGS SURROUNDING THE ACRO'S HEART PROJECT.



Senator
A POLITICIAN HOPING TO USE ACRO'S HEART FOR ECONOMIC GAIN.



Shigeki Katsumata
(ACRO'S HEART FRAGMENT HOLDER)
A MAN SEEKING TO BRING ABOUT A WORLDWIDE REVOLUTION UNDER ORDERS OF THE ONE.



Megumi Ochiai
TAISUKE'S CHILDHOOD FRIEND. HAS BEEN LIVING WITH KATSUMATA EVER SINCE SHE WAS KIDNAPPED BY HIROSE.



Michele
POWER: UNKNOWN
A JOLLY GIANT AND MEMBER OF KATSUMATA'S GROUP WHO INFORMED TAISUKE OF MEGUMI'S SAFETY.



Takumi Yura
POWER: PRESSURIZED AIR
A MAN ENTHRALLED BY ACRO'S HEART. LEFT KATSUMATA'S GROUP AND CURRENTLY ACTS ALONE.



Kyouko Amamiya
A REPORTER INVESTIGATING THE TRUTH BEHIND THE MASS SUICIDE. SHE'S CURRENTLY CHASING AFTER ACRO'S HEART.



Masashi Oda
FELLOW REPORTER AND AMAMIYA'S JUNIOR. SEEMS LIKE THE OFFICE FOOL, BUT IS SURPRISINGLY THOROUGH WITH HIS WORK?

contents

= COMRADE



Yukie Tezuka
(ACRO'S HEART FRAGMENT HOLDER)
A WOMAN PLANNING TO SEAL AWAY ACRO'S HEART. "MAMA" TO SEVEN CHILDREN (BIOLOGICAL).



Ray Tezuka
THE ELDEST SON AND LEADER OF THE MAMA GROUP. NERVOUS BY NATURE.



Jun Tezuka
POWER: ELECTRICITY

THE SECOND ELDEST SON. AN EXTREMELY SHY BOY, BUT WIELDS IMPRESSIVE MARTIAL ABILITY.



Anzu Tezuka
THE ELDEST DAUGHTER AND SUPPOSED SUPER-HACKER IN CHARGE OF INTEL AND DATA MANIPULATION.



Aoi Tezuka
POWER: SPEED

SECOND ELDEST DAUGHTER. SHE ADORES TAISUKE LIKE A REAL BROTHER. HOSTILE TOWARD YUTA.



Taisuke Kanou
POWER: REBIRTH AND DEATH
FORMERLY A NORMAL HIGH SCHOOLER, HE'S BEEN FOLLOWED BY A HAPLESS FATE EVER SINCE THE MASS SUICIDE INCIDENT.



Nami Kusunoki
POWER: ICE CLAWS
A HIGH-SCHOOL STUDENT LIVING IN MORIOKA. COUPLED WITH HER POWER, SHE'S ALSO A MASTER-LEVEL MARTIAL ARTIST.



Yuta Takizawa
POWER: ISOLATION
A FIFTH GRADER WHO'S VERY MATURE FOR HIS AGE. LIVES WITH HIS GRANDPARENTS.


ALIVE
We are alive on this planet, and they arrived... THE FINAL EVOLUTION


WEE-WHEW
WHO'D HAVE THOUGHT THE RUNAWAY DAUGHTER WOULD COME BACK WITH A BOY IN TOW?
TALK ABOUT SCANDAL-OUS!
YOU'VE BEEN AT IT ALL DAY... I TOLD YOU, HE'S JUST A FREELOADER!
Have a good day!
THEY'RE CLOSE ENOUGH FOR HIM TO SEE HER OFF IN THE MORNING, THOUGH!
THEY ARE LIVING TOGETHER, AFTER ALL.
I'M GOING HOME!
C'MON, DON'T GET MAD!
WE'RE JUST TEASING YOU!



SLIDE すらっ
NAMI-SEMPAI!
IS IT TRUE THAT YOU HAVE A BOY-FRIEND?!
?!
IT'S NOT SOME PUNK FROM THE DOJO, RIGHT?
I HEARD THEY'RE ON A FIRST NAME BASIS.
Did we say too much?
AHH! WHO'S THE BASTARD?! LET'S KILL HIM!
DEATH TO THE INTERLOPER!
SEMPAI SEMPAI
THIS IS BAD.
THANKS TO KANOU, NOW THE WHOLE SCHOOL HAS THE WRONG IDEA.
TIME TO LEAVE!
I HAVE TO GET HOME AND TELL KANOU NOT TO STAND OUT ANY-


NAMIIII!
ズザッ SKRR
Chapter 47
That reminds me...
All great truths begin as blasphemies.


SHUDDER SHUDDER
SHUDDER
...?!
NAMI, WAIT TILL YOU HEAR THIS!
YOU WON'T BELIEVE IT!
SCURRY
SCURRY
HEY! WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING?!
GRR
HUH?! I'M NO ONE SUSPICIOUS! I'M JUST...
HERE TO PICK UP NAMI OVER THERE! NAMI, BACK ME UP!
GRR
GRR
NAMI!
...
TWITCH
SHING
SQUAD ONE,
FORWARD.


TAKE AIM!
ZOOSH
FIRE!
WHAT THE?! ARE WE AT WAR?!
BAP
THUD
THMP
SHCK
ばらら
FRTRTR
WHOA!
ALL UNITS, ATTACK!
WAHHH!
?!


WAHHHH!
DON'T LET HIM LIVE!
ARE ALL GIRLS' SCHOOLS LIKE THAT?
She called them a squadron...
THIS SCHOOL HAS A LOT OF CLUBS...
AHHH
HUFF
HUFF
WHAT ... WAS THAT?
SO, DID YOU COME TO CHECK OUT THE SCHOOL OR WHAT?
GOOH
FSHHH
NO, I CAME TO PICK YOU UP.
...ARE YOU MAD?


OH, THAT'S RIGHT! I HAVE GOOD NEWS!
YOU CAME ALL THE WAY HERE TO TELL ME?
YUP.
YOU SEEMED ODD-LY WORRIED ABOUT IT, SO I THOUGHT I SHOULD TELL YOU ASAP!
IT'S ABOUT MEGUMI!
SHE'S ALIVE!


MEGUMI IS SAFE.
SHE TOLD ME TO GIVE YOU THIS FLOWER AND TO TELL YOU NOT TO WORRY.
YOU KNOW MEGU?! WHERE IS SHE NOW?!
Chicken boy.
ARE YOU A BIRDBRAIN OR SOMETHING? I SAID SHE'S WITH MITAMA!
THEY'RE PROBABLY PLAYING RIGHT ABOUT NOW.
MITAMA?
PLAYING?!
BUT LAST I HEARD KATSU-MATA TOOK HER AWAY...
SKRIT SKRIT
VRUM
!
VROOM
SEE YA, TAISUKE! I DELIVERED IT LIKE I PROMISED!


WAIT! EXPLAIN TO ME IN A WAY I UNDER-STAND!
VRRR
DON'T SWEAT IT! THERE ARE NO BORDERS TO WORDS BETWEEN COMRADES, BROTHER!
True enough.
WAIT, THAT'S NOT...!
BACK TO SEE-ING THE SIGHTS!
FUJI-YAMA! HARA KIRI!
HEY!
VROOM
MEGU'S ...
...WITH MITAMA?
HUFF
HUFF
VWOHH
GLANCE
GLANCE
DAMN ...
WHAT'S WITH THAT GUY?!
VRRR


SO, IN THE END YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHERE SHE IS?
UH-HUH. SO I FIGURED I'D GO SIGHTSEE-ING, TOO.
Sightseeing with Nami? How long will you be away?
CRETIN!
GAH
SLAM
BUT YOUR DAD JUST THREW ME TO THE GROUND WHEN I TOLD THEM, SO I HAVE NOTHING TO GO ON.
I'M NOT SUR-PRISED...
BUT...
...IT'S GOOD TO KNOW MEGU-SAN IS SAFE.
UH-HUH!
I DON'T THINK THAT MICKIE GUY WAS LYING, ANYWAY.
PUZZLED
???
?
YEAH!
IT'S ENOUGH KNOWING SHE'S OKAY!


WE'RE GONNA HAVE TO LOOK FROM SCRATCH ALL OVER AGAIN.
FOR THE HEART AND MEGU!
I HAVE TO BRING HER BACK...


...
THI-
THIS PICTURE IS PRETTY WEIRD, HUH?
AH!
I GUESS MEGU DREW IT...
APPARENTLY IT'S SUPPOSED TO BE ME,
BUT IT'S ON A WHOLE OTHER LEVEL OF BAD...
Am I some criminal?
SHE COMPLETELY FORGOT WHAT I LOOK LIKE, DIDN'T SHE?
TAISUKE KANO
RURSTLE
...IT DOES LOOK LIKE YOU.
RURSTLE


IT TAKES A CHILDHOOD FRIEND TO CAPTURE A RESEMBLANCE LIKE THAT.
I'M AWFUL.
FOR A MOMENT JUST NOW,
HUH? YOU REALLY THINK SO?
I THOUGHT...
LET'S GET GO-ING.
...IF MEGUMI-SAN COMES BACK...
Really?


SURE!
...KANOU WILL...


I WONDER IF MITCHIE MANAGED TO DELIV-ER IT...
CAN I ASK YOU TO TAKE THIS IN SECRET TO EVERYONE ELSE IN TOKYO?
THERE ARE A LOT OF PLACES TO HAVE FUN IN JAPAN!


IT'S ALL RIGHT.
IT LOOKED LIKE HIM, ANYWAY.
YAWN
YOU DON'T WANT TO DRAW A PORTRAIT LIKE THAT TOO PERFECTLY, ANYWAY.
UWAHHHH
THE BABY ACROSS THE STREET IS CRYING AGAIN...
POMF
UWAHHHHH
MUST BE TOUGH...
...BEING A MOM.


ME-GU-MIIII!
SHHH
ズル
SHHH
ズル
ME~ GU~ MI~!
JEEZ! IS THAT DUMMY STILL ASLEEP?
!
SHKA SHKA
SHE DIDN'T GET TO BED UNTIL MORNING. WHY DON'T YOU LET HER SLEEP A LITTLE LON-GER,
MITAMA?


HMM.
SINCE WHEN DO YOU GIVE ME ORDERS,
KATSUMATA?


...
I'M JUST NAGGING.
DUMB GEEZER ...
KACHA KACHA
IT SURE IS QUIET.
I'M BORED.
TELL ME A STORY, KATSU-MATA.
...
BLU BUB
BOOO! YOU'RE SO DULL!
HEY...
THAT COFFEE...


YOU DRINK IT EVERY DAY, HUH?
IS IT TASTY?
IT'S BITTER.
BITTER...
THEY SAY BITTERNESS...
BLEH
...IS PICKED UP BY THE ROOT OF THE TONGUE.
IT'S GENERALLY SUPPOSED TO BE AN UNPLEASANT SENSATION,
BUT IS IT ACTUALLY TASTY?
I CAME TO APPRECIATE THE TASTE AFTER I BECAME AN ADULT.
SO IT GETS BETTER WHEN YOU GROW UP...
I'M JEALOUS...
I WANT TO GROW UP SOON, TOO!


DO I SEEM ADORABLE...
...IF I TALK LIKE THAT, GRAMPS?
IT'S EASIER FOR MEGUMI...
TO FEEL COMPASSION FOR ME THAT WAY, TOO.
MY BEHAVIOR AND APPEARANCE ARE THAT OF A CHILD.
CLACK
THIS BODY MAKES FOR A GOOD WEAPON.


BUT RE-GRETTABLY,
IT DOES MAKE EVERYDAY LIFE SOME-WHAT TROU-BLESOME.
CLUNK
KATSUMATA,
HURRY UP AND BRING ME THE HEART.
SLIP


IF YOU CAN'T, THEN BRING ME MEGUMI.
RIGHT AWAY.
...
AS YOU WISH.
IN ONLY TWO YEARS...
...ACRO'S GHOST HAS MATURED THIS MUCH.
IT WON'T BE LONG UNTIL THE BODY IS ABLE TO CONTAIN THE HEART.


ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO TAKE BACK THE HEART FROM THE HUMANS.
TAK
STATUS REPORT.
ALL SIGNS NORMAL.


HM...
THE CHANGE OF COURSE HAS POSTPONED OUR ARRIVAL.
STAY ALERT AND KEEP AN EYE OUT.


CAP, WE'RE AT SEA AND YOU'VE STILL GOT US KEEPING WATCH.
EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE AS LONG AS THE ROCK DOESN'T GO BERSERK.
...
RIGHT...
EVERYTHING CHECKS OUT.
WHOOSH
OR DOES IT...?


SOMETHING'S NAGGING AT ME. SOMETHING...
WHY HAVE I FELT LIKE SOMETHING'S BEEN OFF SINCE THIS MORNING?
...
...
MISSING?!

THE YEOMAN DISAPPEARED, TOO?
YES!
THAT MAKES THREE, Y'KNOW!
I HAVEN'T SEEN JIMMY SINCE THE SECOND DAY WE WERE AT SEA.
SMITH HAS BEEN MISSING SINCE LAST NIGHT...
I'LL LOOK AROUND SOME MORE!
GOOD IDEA. WE'LL DO THE SAME.
LAST I SAW HE WAS TALKING TO THE MECHANIC, CHEN.
BUT CHEN DISAPPEARED, TOO!

THERE ARE CREWMEN MISSING, RIGHT?
?!
TAP TAP TAP
YOU HAVEN'T REPORTED TO YOUR SUPERIORS?
IF THREE PEOPLE HAVE GONE AWOL, YOU SHOULD SEND OUT A SEARCH PARTY.
IF SOMETHING HAPPENS, ALL RESPONSIBILITY FALLS ON THE CAPTAIN.
YOU'RE...
I DID REPORT IT!
BUT THE CAPTAIN JUST SAID, "DON'T MAKE A BIG DEAL OUT OF IT"!
HE DID?


THAT REMINDS ME,
IT LOOKED LIKE SOMETHING THREW YOU OFF IN THE CAPTAIN'S ROOM THIS MORNING.
HUH?
OH, YOU MEAN WHEN I BROUGHT THE COFFEE?
DON'T YOU THINK IT'S STRANGE FOR HIM TO SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
...
COFFEE...
THE CAPTAIN NEVER DRINKS OUT OF ANYTHING THAN HIS PERSONAL MUG...
CLACK
...BUT FOR SOME REASON HE PICKED UP A DIFFERENT CUP.
海人


...
HE'S PROBABLY JUST SHAKEN WITH EVERYTHING THAT'S GONE WRONG LATELY.
TAP
GULP


THAT SHOULD JUST ABOUT DO IT.
WE'RE RIGHT ON COURSE.
AND NO ONE SUSPECTS THAT I'VE TAKEN OVER THE CAPTAIN'S BODY.
SHUT
NOW I JUST NEED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE ROCK'S GUARDS.


BEEP
BEEP
NEXT TO THE ROCK ARE A NUMBER OF RESEARCHERS AND THE PROFESSOR...
AND A GUARD IS ALWAYS POSTED AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE BLOCK.



THOSE THREE ARE THE GUARDS...
MY, OH, MY.
WHAT A CUTIE! HE'S TOTALLY MY TYPE.
I'M FEELING MOTIVATED ALL OF A SUDDEN!


CREAK.
THERE'S PUDDING IN THE MESS HALL.
TWITCH
DR. HORNER, I'M GOING TO TAKE A BREAK NOW. WOULD YOU CARE TO JOIN ME?
...
C'MON, WHY DON'T YOU TAKE A LOAD OFF?
PUDDING! SHOW ME THE PUDDING!
D3, D4, I'LL LEAVE THIS AREA IN YOUR HANDS.
SURE.


JIGGLE
OH-HO-HO! THAT'S THE STUFF!
...
TAP
TAP...
THAT'S...!


BAM
ズカ
SKF
ズカ
SKF
HUH?! WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA, MCPHERSON?
SIR, HAVE YOU SEEN THE CAPTAIN?
HE SHOULD BE IN THE BRIDGE...
HE WASN'T.
THEN MAYBE HE'S IN THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN?
TCH!
HEY!
CLICKING YOUR TONGUE...
WHERE DO YOU GET OFF TALKING TO A SUPERIOR OFFICER LIKE THAT?



THERE ARE TOO MANY SUSPICIOUS POINTS TO IGNORE.
THINKING BACK ON IT, THE CAPTAIN WAS ODDLY INQUISITIVE ABOUT US.
I TOLD YOU NOT TO CHANGE OUR COURSE WITHOUT...
HOW MANY GUARDS WERE ON DUTY, HOW WELL EQUIPPED THEY WERE...
GOOD WORK. YOU MAY RETURN TO YOUR POST.
I CAN'T IMAGINE SOMEONE WHO DESPISES THE ARMY...
THE CAPTAIN'S CABIN
CLACK
...WOULD ACTUALLY PRAISE US!


HEY! DON'T JUST BARGE IN!
MCPHERSON! WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU EVEN NEED WITH THE CAPTAIN?!
TAP



DAMN IT!
WHY DIDN'T I REALIZE SOONER?
I KNEW SOMETHING WAS OFF, AND YET...
CREAK
HEY!



SLUMP
AND A YEO-MAN, TOO! WAKE UP!
WAIT...
C-CAPTAIN?!
THEY'RE DEAD...


IT'S THEM!
D4!
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP
CONFIRM THE ROCK IS SAFE IMMEDIATELY!
SMIRK


BEEP
ドン
BOOM
Chapter 47 / End


ALIVE
We are alive on this planet, and they arrived... THE FINAL EVOLUTION


TAP
TAP
TAP
...!
DR. HORNER, I'M GOING BACK ON GUARD.
I'M WORRIED ABOUT THE ROCK.
NO NEED TO WORRY.
THERE'S NO WAY ANYONE WILL STEAL HIM.


UNDER-STAND, D2?
AND YOU REALLY MUST STOP CALLING THAT CHILD "ROCK,"
NO, NO. YOU DON'T GET IT AT ALL!
WELL, WE ARE AT SEA, I GUESS.
GYAHH!
HE'S ALMOST FULLY AWAKENED SINCE THE COM-RADE ATTACK.
AND HE ONLY KEEPS GROW-ING.
THAT CHILD HAS CHANGED.
BEEP
RIGHT NOW HE'S JUST SORT OF... DOZING OFF.
BEEP


KSH
D4!
KSHH
CONFIRM THE ROCK IS SAFE IMMEDIATELY!
BEEP
BEEP
BEEP


BEEP
BOOM
Chapter 48
That's why...
The only way to have a friend is to be one.



DWOO
?!
OOH
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT NOISE?!
WHAT HAPPENED THIS TIME?!
KSHH
KRR
THOSE DAMN COMRADES!


FLUTTER
CREAK
A SMALL SCALE EXPLOSION OCCURRED IN THE RESEARCH ROOM!
THERE APPEARS TO BE LIGHT DAMAGE TO THE BULKHEAD, BUT THE ROCK SEEMS TO BE SAFE.
KSH
D3, D4! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!
GIVE ME YOUR STATUS!
KRSH
...YES, SIR!
I SEE...


THIS IS THE WORK OF A COMRADE AFTER THE ROCK.
BUT DID THEY FAIL TO EXTRACT IT?
OR IS SOMETHING ELSE AT WORK...?
MY EARS ARE RINGING LIKE A MOTHER, BUT I'M ALL RIGHT.
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT EXPLO-SION?!
D3, ARE YOU OKAY?


SHUDDER
...!
SNAP


THEY GOT US...
...
SO THAT'S HOW IT IS...
CLENCH
WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN?! EXPLAIN YOURSELF!
YOU HAVE MY SYMPATHIES, CAPTAIN.
WITH THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN DEAD, YOU'RE THE HIGH-EST RANKING OFFI-CER ON BOARD.
THE SHIP'S IN YOUR HANDS.


H-HEY! WAIT!
I'LL PRIORITIZE MY DUTY!
MCPHERSON?!
BEEEEEEEE
BEEEEEEEE
FIRE ON BLOCK E! FIRE ON BLOCK E!
CLOSE THE HATCHES TO BLOCKS B, C, AND E!



ALL FREE HANDS, ASSUME FIRE DUTY IMMEDIATELY!
TMP
D2!
TMP
WHERE IS DR. HORNER RIGHT NOW?!
TMP
TAP
TAP
CAPTAIN?!
THE DOC'S WITH ME!
APPARENTLY THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION, SO WE'RE HEADING BACK TO THE ROCK NOW!
TAP
LISTEN! I NEED YOU TO TAKE THE DOCTOR AND...


HUH?! BUT IF WE DO THAT...
JUST DO IT!
HUP TWO THREE FOUR!
WE HAVE TO HURRY!
FSSHHH
SOMEONE SHOOK THAT CHILD AWAKE!
OOPSY-DAISY! THIS IS GOING TO BE A SIGHT TO BEHOLD!
HE'S GOING TO MOVE AGAIN!


WHIRL
GOOSH
POH


DUB
BEEEE
DUB
B-BRIDGE! DO YOU READ ME?
DUB
THE STERN AND BOTTOM OF THE HULL HAVE BEEN SEVERELY DAMAGED! WE'RE TAKING ON WATER!
WHAT?! SEAL OFF ALL BULKHEADS IN THE AREA AND FLOOD THE BOW TO CORRECT THE SHIP'S TILT!
BEEEE
BEEEE
B-BUT...!
THE HOLES!
BEEEE
THEY JUST KEEP...!
BEEEE
BOOM


HUH...?
BEEEE
KREE
ギギィ...
BEEEE
THE SHIP IS TILTING?!
GOH
ゴ
GOOSH
BEEEE
GOH
?!
GOH


D2! OVER HERE!
FWIP
FWIP
...!
PAH
GOH
GET ON!
BSHH
GWOH


FWIP
BOOM
NOOO! LET ME GO BACK!
IT'S TOO DANGER-OUS, DOC-TOR.
WE WOULD'VE BEEN IN TROU-BLE TOO IF WE STAYED ANY LONGER...


FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
YOU SAVED OUR NECKS, CAPTAIN.
...
THE SMALL EXPLOSION WAS TO MAKE THE ROCK GO BERSERK.
UNDER THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO GET ANY RESEARCH DATA.
WE WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO RETRIEVE THE DATA THE DOCTOR ALREADY HAD.
THEY PLAYED ME LIKE A DAMN FIDDLE!


NOT ONLY DID A COMRADE INFILTRATE THE SHIP DISGUISED AS A SOLDIER,
BUT THEY EVEN MANAGED TO KILL THE SHIP'S CAPTAIN WITHOUT US REALIZING A THING.
KABOOM
THE MISSION IS A FAILURE.
THE ROCK IS SINKING TO THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN.
BLUB
BUB
BUB


BUT...
JUST WHY DID THE COMRADE SINK THE ROCK?
DON'T THEY WANT TO GET THEIR HANDS ON IT, TOO?
DON'T TOUCH THE HEART...
YOU'LL ALL BE KILLED!
...
I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE THINKING,
ALL I KNOW IS THEY'RE AFTER THE ROCK!
WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE IT DOESN'T FALL INTO THEIR HANDS...
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
FWIP
HE-HE...


HE-HE...
WELL, THAT WENT WELL.
THEY DON'T SUSPECT ANYTHING, RIGHT?
I'VE COMPLETELY TAKEN OVER THIS BODY, AFTER ALL.


THIS D3 GUY IS APPARENTLY A COMBAT ENGINEER.
HE'S WELL VERSED IN EXPLOSIVES.
THANKS TO HIS KNOWLEDGE, I THREW TOGETHER THAT BOMB LIKE A PRO.
WATCHING THESE RUGGED HANDS SKILLFULLY SET THE EXPLOSIVES UP...
...I ALMOST FELL FOR MYSELF!
ALL THAT'S LEFT IS TO WAIT A WHILE UNTIL I CAN FIGURE OUT THESE GUYS' NEXT MOVE, THEN IT'S SO LONG!
AHH, BUT Y'KNOW I JUST LOVE PLUMP BOYS LIKE THIS!
IT'D BE A SHAME TO MOVE AGAIN!


WELL, AT ANY RATE...
I CARRIED OUT KATSUMATA-SAN'S ORDERS AND SUNK THE HEART.
I GUESS I'LL ENJOY LIFE IN THIS BODY FOR A WHILE.


"DECIDE WHY YOU'RE CHASING AFTER THE HEART,
AND WHAT IT IS YOU'RE FIGHTING FOR," HUH?
IN OTHER WORDS, IT'S GONNA BE SUPER DANGEROUS, SO BACK OUT WHILE YOU CAN."
TRUE...


LIVING A NORMAL LIFE FROM NOW ON IS ALSO AN OPTION.
IN MY CASE, ANYWAY.
DING
DONG
C'MON, YUTA! TELL US THE TRUTH ALREADY!
THERE'S NOTHING TO TELL...
YOU RAN AWAY FROM HOME TO GO SOMEWHERE, RIGHT?
YEAH, TO FIGHT THE ARMY.
LIKE I COULD TELL THEM THAT.
Welcome back.
I BET YOU WENT TO THAT HIGH SCHOOL GIRL'S PLACE, DIDN'T YOU?!
Even though you're only ten!
IT'S NOT EVEN A LIE...
YOU CAN'T EVEN TELL US, YOUR FRIENDS?!
...


HOME!
I WENT TO MY DAD'S PLACE.
IN THE END, I LIED TO THEM.
GRANDMA CUT OFF ALL CON-TACT WITH MY DAD,
SO SHE DOESN'T TRY TO PRY WHEN IT COMES TO HIM.
THE FACULTY DIDN'T QUESTION ME MUCH, EITHER.


THEY MUST HAVE SOME SORT OF AGREEMENT OR SOMETHING.
IT'S AS IF IT'S TABOO TO TALK ABOUT MY PARENTS AROUND ME.
SO MY DAD WORKS AS A GREAT TRUMP CARD TO GET OUT OF STICKY SITUATIONS.
THAT BEING SAID, I DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS OR HOW HE'S DOING NOW, EITHER.
MONSTER!
NOT THAT I EVEN WANT TO KNOW.


OH, YEAH. WHAT DO YOUR MOM AND DAD DO AN-
CHOP
Hey!
H-HEY, WHY DON'T WE PLAY SOME SOCCER?
IT'S BEEN A WHILE.
I GUESS THEY HEAR RUMORS ABOUT MY FAMILY.
BUT THEY ALMOST NEVER BRING IT UP.
THEY'RE GOOD GUYS.
BUT,
THAT'S ALSO WHY...


...KEEPING EVERYTHING A SECRET,
ABOUT THAT DAY AND HOW THE WORLD TURNED UPSIDE DOWN,
AND ABOUT THE EXIS-TENCE OF THE COM-RADES...
...MAKES ME FEEL LIKE I'M BETRAY-ING MY FRIENDS.
I FEEL A LITTLE GUILTY.


YUTA-KUN! DO YOUR BEST!
!
TWITCH
...
JUST IGNORE THEM, GUYS...
HEY!
CHATTER
CHATTER
OH, CRAP. THAT MADE MY HEART POUND EVEN THOUGH IT'S OKADA...
WHY DOES IT HAVE TO BE OKADA?
TO THINK THAT PIGLET...
...WOULD REFORM SO WELL, HUH?
ドキドキ
BADUMP
YOU IDIOTS! OKADA HAS ALWAYS BEEN CUTE!
I never teased her!
I knew all along!
START
Quit taking photos of me.
IN OTHER NEWS, THERE'S BEEN A SMALL CHANGE HERE, TOO.


before
He looked over here!
after
KURUMI OKADA LOST WEIGHT.
OKADA LOST WEIGHT LIKE CRAZY AS SOON AS YUTA DISAPPEARED.
I ACTUALLY ENVY YOU FOR ONCE.
Even though it's Okada.
WOULD YOU GUYS GIVE IT A REST...? LATER!
SEE YA!
I'M HO-
YUTA-KUN!
WHA?!
SLIDE


OKADA?! WHERE DID YOU COME FROM? WH-WHAT'S UP?
UM... HERE...
?
THEY'RE NOTES FROM WHEN YOU WEREN'T AT SCHOOL.
I MADE A COPY FOR YOU.
WHOA!
ALL THIS? THAT MUST HAVE TAKEN FOREVER.
FEEL FREE TO USE THEM IF YOU'D LIKE!
OH, BUT... YOU'RE SMART ANYWAY.
MAYBE YOU DON'T NEED THEM, AFTER ALL.
NO WAY! I REALLY APPRECIATE IT!
THANKS A LOT!
IT'S NOTHING...
WHAT'S THAT ONE FOR?
SWOON



OH...
THIS IS FOR AOI-CHAN.
Aoi Tezuka-chan
I TEASED HER A LOT,
SO SHE MIGHT NOT EVEN COME TO SCHOOL ANYMORE, BUT...
...JUST IN CASE.
HUH?
THAT REMINDS ME, WHAT DID SHE DO ABOUT SCHOOL UNTIL NOW?
WHAT ABOUT HER FRIENDS?
HER FAMILY TRAVELS AROUND THE WORLD, SO SHE MIGHT HAVE ALWAYS HAD TO LEAVE BEFORE SHE COULD REALLY SETTLE DOWN ANYWHERE.
IN THAT CASE...


...HAVING FRIENDS LIKE THIS WHO ARE WAITING FOR YOU...
...IS REAL-LY SPE-CIAL.
I THINK SHE'LL COME.
KNOWING HER, SHE'LL PROBABLY COME RUNNING.
SEE YA!


NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT,
IT WAS AROUND THIS TIME WHEN I FIRST MET TAISUKE.
?!
YUTA TAKIZA-WAAA!
HUFF
HUFF
HUFF


MAMA GAVE THE CALL TO ASSEM- BLE!
ARE YOU COMING OR NOT, WHICH IS IT?!
IT'S AOI- CHAN!
AOI- CHAN?!
WELL? WHICH IS IT?!
ぜは WHEEZE
ぜは WHEEZE
She actually came running...
TO BE HONEST...
...I DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT THE HEART.


I'M GOING!
THERE'S NO WAY I WOULDN'T GO!
AS FAR AS YUKIE-SAN IS CONCERNED...
Hey!
Where are you going?!
...I'M SURE MY REASON FOR CHAS-ING THE HEART
?!
SEEMS STUPID COMPARED TO THE OTHERS.
PAT PAT



Aoi Tezuka-chan
TH-THANKS FOR THE NOTES!
I'LL BE SURE TO COME GET THEM!
THAT'S WHY...


成田国際空
Narita Airport Te
...I WON'T TELL ANYONE.
AH! YUTA!
YO.
I CAN'T BELIEVE WE'RE GOING OVERSEAS.
I KNOW, RIGHT? THIS WILL BE MY FIRST TIME ON A PLANE.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT...



THAT MAKES EVERY-ONE.
HERE'S YOUR PASS-PORT.
IS THIS... FAKE?
DON'T WORRY, ANZU HAS RELIABLE SOURCES.
THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT...
It'll be fine.
FWEEEE
ALL RIGHT! EVERYONE, LISTEN UP!
WELCOME TO THE TEZUKA FAMILY ADVEN-TURE TOUR.
Heart wagon
PLEASE BEAR IN MIND THAT THIS TOUR IS FILLED WITH DANGER, SO WE CANNOT GUARANTEE YOUR SAFETY.
Hey, hey...
WHAT'S WITH YOU, REI-NII?
You even brought a flag.
FWEEEE
YOU THERE! THE CAREFREE JAPANESE MAN!
WHIP
YOU'RE THE LAST PERSON I WANT TO HEAR THAT FROM!
ARE YOU SUP-POSED TO BE FARFETCH'D OR SOMETHING?!
She really likes him, huh?
My mom gave him a lot to take.
I CAN'T KEEP THIS SHIT UP WITHOUT DOING THIS!


WE'RE GOING UP AGAINST HIROSE, AFTER ALL.
WILL YOU ALL STILL COME WITH ME?
NO TURNING BACK NOW...
I'LL HELP, TOO!


EVERYONE, MOVE OUT!
I'M IN CHARGE HERE.
BY THE WAY...
APPARENTLY AOI AND OKADA BEGAN EXCHANGING LETTERS.
To Kurumi,
How are you? I'm doing well. So is Yuta.
From Aoi
AIR MAIL, HUH...?
CREAK
SWELL
NICE RE-BOUND!
Chapter 48 / End


ALIVE
We are alive on this planet, and they arrived... THE FINAL EVOLUTION


Customs
IS THIS EVERY-THING YOU HAVE ON YOU?
YOU'RE REALLY NOT ON ANY DRUGS?
I TOLD YOU, I'M NOT ON ANYTHING YOU @*(&$%!
WHERE ARE YOUR SHOES, THEN?!
BEING BARE-FOOT IS PART OF JAPANESE &*$% CULTURE.
YOU $@*% REALLY ARE &@*%#, HUH?!
CAN YOU ONLY TALK WITH YOUR CROTCH?! WE WON'T LET YOU IN THE COUNTRY LIKE THIS!
IS THIS PASSPORT REAL?
TAKUMI YURA.
ARE YOU HERE FOR WORK? VACATION? VACATION, RIGHT?
YURA
名/Given name
TAKUMI
国 籍/Nationality
JAPAN
性別/Sex


YEAH.
I'M HERE TO SEE SOMETHING OUT OF THIS WORLD.
US
Chapter 49
I am really lonely
Voices.


HUH...?
AIRCRAFT CARRIER DE-STROYED?!
HANG ON A SECOND. WASN'T THE HEART ON THAT SHIP?
IT'S NOT COMING HERE, THEN?!


Well, shit.
...
FLAP FLAP
WHAT DID I COME HERE FOR, THEN?
TERSE
Nails
GRRLLL
SWAY
JUST MY LUCK...
EVERYTHING WAS FINE UP UNTIL I CHASED THE HEART TO YOKOSUKA...
GRRRR
GRRRRRR


THE POWER WENT DOWN AND I HEARD GUNFIRE.
THINGS WERE PRETTY CRAZY AT THE BASE YESTER-DAY.
THE PULSE IS GROWING FURTHER AWAY...
IS THE HEART INSIDE THAT SHIP?
...I GUESS I'LL HEAD EAST!
WELL, AT ANY RATE...


GRRRR
GIMME A BREAK...
I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY GOT INTO AN ACCIDENT.
KER THUNK
IT SAYS ACCIDENT, BUT THOSE HOLES WERE DEFINITELY CAUSED BY HIROSE'S POWER.
SO THE HEART IS WITH HIROSE...
IT'D BE DANGER-OUS TO GET TOO CLOSE TO IT.
DANGEROUS, BUT...
tic tac


...IF I COULD JUST CATCH A GLIMPSE...
...OF THE HEART ONE MORE TIME...
THUNK
AH!
K-R
E E
CRAP...
K R S H


ANOTHER DOG?
HEY, SOME-ONE CHASE IT OFF!
CLATTER
THIS JUST ISN'T MY DAY.
SCUTTLE
THUD THUD
BAM
HEY, DOG! SHOO!
AHH! A PERSON ?!



* Princess





UM... YURA-SAN? COULD YOU STOP CALLING ME HIME?
SURE THING. YOUR WISH IS MY COMMAND.
SO, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? STUDYING ABROAD?
STARE
STARE
...SOME-THING LIKE THAT.
HMM. SO KATSUMATA AND CO. LET YOU GO, HUH?
NOM
NOM
HM? SOME-THING ON MY FACE?
I WAS JUST THINKING YOU'RE NOT AS SCARY AS I THOUGHT YOU WERE.
I'm not scary~
I CAN'T BLAME YOU. TO YOU, WE WERE THE ONES KEEPING YOU LOCKED UP.
WHAT ABOUT THE OTHERS FROM THE MANSION?
ARE THEY ALL HERE, TOO?


AHH...
THEY'RE ALL DEAD.
?!
THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT.
CLINK CLINK
I KNOW!


WANNA COME OVER?
PAT PAT
HOP IN THE BATH AS SOON AS WE GET THERE, OKAY?
YOU STINK.
LET ME KNOW IF YOU WANT A KEY.
OH, AND WE NEED TO GET YOU SOME SHOES!
IS SHE TRYING TO SEDUCE ME?
ZIIIIP
SHE'S COMPLETELY DIFFERENT FROM WHEN WE HELD HER CAP-TIVE.
SHE MIGHT BE STRONGER THAN I GAVE HER CREDIT FOR.
JINGLE
...
MIND IF I DRAW YOU ONCE?



HUH?
CAN YOU STRIP?
WHA?!
ARE YOU STUPID OR SOME-THING?!
MEGUMI!
WELCOME HOME, MICKIE!
I couldn't find any samurai or ninja.
Your Japa-nese has gotten better.
There are dudes, too?



SO? DID YOU SEE TAISUKE?
I THINK IT WAS PROBABLY A WASTE OF MONEY. TOO BAD...
HUH? WHAT...?
TAISUKE!
HE WAS LIVING WITH SOME GIRL IN THE COUNTRY-SIDE!
TAISUKE? HUH!
TO THINK THERE WERE OTHER COMRADES WHO SUR-VIVED.
お? HM?
....HUH?



* Reference to Antonio Inoki, a former pro wrestler.


LIAR.
WHOOPS.
YOU'RE BRAVE. MEGUMI IS SCARIER THAN MITAMA WHEN YOU MAKE HER ANGRY. HM...?
!
ARE YOU A COMRADE?
WONDERFUL!
HUG
URGH ?!


SLAP
GAHAHAHA
I HEAR THERE AREN'T MANY WHO SURVIVED!
SLAP
NICE TO MEET YOU, BROTHER!
...
げほ KOF
ごほ KOF
OH! IF YOU CAME HERE, THEN...
...DOES THAT MEAN YOU WERE CALLED BY KATSUMATA-SAN, TOO?!
KATSU...




YOU CAME TO SEE KATSUMATA-SAN, RIGHT?
...
GIVE ME A BREAK...
HE USED US...
WE WERE BETRAYED BY HIM!
CLENCH


WHENEVER I THINK ABOUT THAT, I HATE MYSELF FOR EVER LIKING THE BASTARD!
TELL THE OLD MAN THIS!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE PLANNING THIS TIME,
BUT YOU'RE THE ONE DOING OTHERS' BIDDING NOW!
AND THERE'S NOT A DAMN THING YOU CAN DO TO FIGHT BACK!


H-HEY...
THAT MUST BE...
..."THE ONE" KATSUMATA TALKED ABOUT.
OUR MASTER.
A WALKING CORPSE THAT REEKS OF BLOOD AND DEATH...
...WHOSE ONLY DESIRE IS THE HEART.



I SAW SOME-THING FOUL TODAY.
PTT
I FEEL SICK!
YURA-KUN, EH?



I'M SURPRISED THAT HE'S STILL ALIVE, TOO.
IT APPEARS HE DESPISES ME NOW.
CLACK
カチャ
TMP
スタ
TMP
スタ
HEY, KATSU-MATA.
HOW LONG UNTIL I GET MY HEART?
MITAMA, THAT'S STILL-



FTMP
?!
ZRTCH
KATSUMATA...


HOW LONG UNTIL I GET HEART?
I WANT IT NOW.
I'M ONLY LETTING YOU KEEP THIS FRAGMENT FOR NOW.
JUST UNTIL YOU RETRIEVE THE HEART.
I GAVE YOU YOUR FREEDOM.
I COULD RIP THE FRAGMENT FROM YOUR CHEST RIGHT HERE AND NOW, YOU KNOW.
I WONDER WHAT WOULD HAPPEN...
...IF YOU LOST THE ABILITY TO RECOVER LIKE THIS.
ZRRR


IN ORDER TO REMOVE THE HEART FROM THE HANDS OF MAN...
P L I P
P L I P
...I HAD IT SUNK TO THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN.
MITAMA, PLEASE UNDER-STAND...
...YOU STILL NEED TIME.
AND WHILE YOU TELL ME TO WAIT,
JUST TAKE A LOOK.
MY BODY CAN'T KEEP UP WITH MY OWN GROWTH AND IS TEARING APART.
WILL I GET THE HEART FIRST?
OR WILL THE BUGS PICK AT MY DECAYING CORPSE FIRST?


IF YOU DON'T MAKE IT IN TIME...
...I'LL TAKE BACK YOUR FRAGMENT, UNDER-STOOD?
ZOOSH
...!
BAM
THUD
GRAB
...


SHRK
FLAP
BADUMP
GUH ...
HUFF
BADUMP
HUFF
BADUMP
...
AND THERE'S NOT A DAMN THING YOU CAN DO TO FIGHT BACK!
BADUMP
YURA-KUN SURE HIT ME WHERE IT HURTS.
BADUMP


I KNOW THAT. I'M WELL AWARE...
KOFF
BUT EVEN SO...
...I HAVE TO DO IT.


MEANWHILE IN THE AREA WHERE THE EXPLOSION OCCURRED,
WORK IS STILL BEING DONE TODAY TO COLLECT FRAGMENTS AND LOST CARGO FROM THE DESTROYED AIRCRAFT CARRIER.
MNC
THE CARRIER IS CURRENTLY DOCKED AT A NEARBY HARBOR AND IS UNDERGOING FURTHER INVESTIGATION.
THE MILITARY HAS DENIED THE POSSIBILITY OF A TERRORIST ATTACK AND RELEASED A STATEMENT CLAIMING THAT THE EXPLOSION WAS CAUSED BY AN ACCIDENT IN THE AMMUNITION DEPOT ABOARD THE SHIP.
CREAK
THE MEDIA IS HAVING A FIELD DAY.

SO, I TAKE IT YOU HAVE NOTHING TO SHOW US,
CAPTAIN?
M-MY APOLOGIES, SENATOR.
THE HEART SUNK INTO THE OCEAN AND WE WERE UNABLE TO RECOVER IT.


"OVER ONE THOUSAND PEOPLE DIE IN TRAGIC EXPLOSION", HUH?
I SEE...
WE'LL PROBABLY BE ABLE TO AVOID AN INQUIRY MEETING.
PHEW
SHIK
THANKFULLY THE FACT THAT WE WERE TRANSPORTING THE ROCK IS TOP-SECRET.
THERE ARE NO RECORDS THAT YOU ALL WERE ON BOARD THE CARRIER.
FLAP
THE MILITARY IS SENDING APOLOGIES AND COMPENSATION TO THE FAMILIES OF THE DEAD AS WE SPEAK.
THE MEDIA WILL QUIET DOWN SOON ENOUGH.
FZT
YOU SHOULD THANK OUR DEAR DEPARTED CAPTAIN!
TWITCH
Look, he's standing behind you right now...


BUT LET'S GET ONE THING STRAIGHT.
WE MUST RECOVER THE HEART AT ANY COST.
B-BUT, SIR! RECOVERING THE HEART WILL TAKE TIME.
IT'S LEAGUES UNDER THE SEA AND WE'VE YET TO GET A LOCK ON ITS SPECIFIC LOCATION.
OH, CAPTAIN, YOU POOR FOOL...
YOU HAVE NO IDEA JUST HOW SPECIAL THAT CHILD IS!

HE IS A BOX HIDING INFINITE POSSIBILITIES!
HE HAS ENOUGH POWER TO MAKE ALL OF MANKIND'S DREAMS COME TRUE!
WE'RE TALKING ABOUT AN INFINITE SUPPLY OF ENERGY!
DESPITE THAT CHILD LIVING THESE PAST TWO YEARS WITHOUT ANY OUTSIDE PROVISION
HIS PULSE HAS ONLY BEEN GROWING STRONGER AND GENERATING AN OVERFLOWING AMOUNT OF ENERGY.
LIKE A SPRING THAT SHOWS NO SIGN OF DRYING...


WE MUST FIND A WAY TO MONOPOLIZE THAT POWER.
THIS WILL LIKELY BRING ABOUT THE GREATEST REVOLUTION FOR MANKIND SINCE THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION.
BETWEEN THE STATE AND THE MILITARY...
...OUR COUNTRY WILL HOLD THE HEGEMONY OVER THE WORLD.


AS SUCH, WITHOUT OUR NEIGHBORS CATCHING ON...
MMMM...
HMMMM...
...RECOVER THE HEART AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, CAPTAIN!
MRRR...
MUMBLE EASIER SAID THAN DONE ... MUMBLE
!
MCPHERSON! WE'RE ALL DONE.

COULD YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT THE PNSP, DR. HORNER?
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
OH... I JUST DON'T UNDER-STAND.
WHY DID THE COMRADES SINK THE ROCK?
HUH?
CERTAINLY! THEIR POWER COMES IN MANY FORMS.
THE ABILITY TO FLY, CONTROL MATTER, DESTROY...
THOSE ARE BUT A FEW EXAMPLES!
THAT BEING SAID...



THE SOURCE OF THE COMRADES' POWER...
...STEMS FROM HOLES IN THE HEART.
WOUNDS OF THE HEART VARY IN SHAPE AND SEVERITY BE- TWEEN PEOPLE. THE SAME GOES FOR POWERS.
IT WOULD BE AS IF I WIELDED A LIGHTSABER, WHILE YOU USED A KNIFE!
BUT THE POWER ITSELF IS TRAGIC...
ORIGINALLY, IT WAS THE WILL TO END ONE'S OWN LIFE, HOWEVER...


...IT COLLIDED WITH THE WILL TO LIVE WITHIN PEOPLE...
...AND TRANS-FORMED INTO SUPERNATURAL POWERS.
WAIT...
OOPS!
THIS IS ACTUALLY TOP-SECRET,
BUT THE MILITARY HAS A COMRADE IN ITS CUSTODY...
HOW CAN YOU BE SO SURE WHEN YOU WERE ONLY RESEARCHING THE ROCK?
THE ONLY COMRADE SAM-PLES YOU COULD OBTAIN WERE DEAD, TOO.
...AND SAID COMRADE HAS A PREMIUM ATTACHED, SO WE CAN'T TURN HIM INTO A GUINEA PIG.
A LIVING WITNESS TOLD ME HIMSELF!


HE'S CALLED "THE POET,"
AND HE APPARENTLY HOLDS A FRAGMENT OF THE HEART.
KAT KAT


INCLUDING HIM...
...THERE ARE THREE PEOPLE WHO BEAR A FRAGMENT.
HE'S BEING HELD IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT OF HIS OWN ACCORD,
YET HE NEVER STOPS TALKING TO HIMSELF.
IT'S HARD BRING ALL ALONE.


WE USED TO BE ONE.
AND WE MUST INEVITABLY BECOME ONE AGAIN.
BADUMP
IF OUR “GHOST” WISHES FOR IT...
BADUMP
...WE MUST RELINQUISH THE FRAGMENT.
BADUMP
THE IMPERFECT HEART WILL MEND...
BADUMP
...AND THE GHOST WILL BE-COME WHOLE.
BADUMP
I HEAR THE HEART’S PULSE...
BADUMP
...BEATING FROM THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN.


KRR
THE VOICE SPEAKS.
CLACK
SOUND BECOMES VOICE.
WHAT THE VOICE LONGS FOR IS ITS FORMER...
FRIENDS,
HUH?


A MILITARY FACILITY IN A CERTAIN STATE.
THAT BOY'S BEEN COOPED UP FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS.
I CAN'T MAKE HEADS OR TAILS OVER WHAT HE SAYS.
BUT DON'T COUNT ON MEETING HIM!
HE'S VERY TIMID AND WOULD FAINT AS SOON AS HE SAW YOU!
...
WHERE IS HE NOW?
TAKE ME TO HIM, PROFESSOR.
IF WE PLAY OUR CARDS RIGHT...


...WE MIGHT JUST GET A LEAD ON HOW TO RETRIEVE THE HEART.
KANO TAISUKE
OCHIAI MEGUMI
Chapter 49 / End

ALIVE

We are alive on this planet, and they arrived... THE FINAL EVOLUTION



*Don't walk and smoke.


It's hooot...
MAN, I DON'T KNOW HOW YURA DOES IT!
I wanna get naked...
HE GOES BAREFOOT EVERY-WHERE!
...OR SO I SOMETIMES THINK ABOUT CHARACTERS IN MY EVERYDAY LIFE.
Good after-noon.
Shoeless Adachitoka here.
FOR EXAM-PLE...
GRADE SCHOOL-ERS...
YUTA AND AOI...
...ARE A LITTLE TALLER I THINK.
Don't look.
It's fiiine!


A GIRLS' SCHOOL...
女子大附属高等
NAMI SEEMS LIKE A SPORTY GIRL, HUH?
I'LL RUN ALL THE WAY HOME TODAY!
AN OLDER DUDE AND A YOUNG GIRL... ARE THEY RELATED?
EARN 2X POINTS TODAY!
THAT REMINDS ME...
...I WONDER HOW THE READERS SEE THOSE TWO.
Should I braise the meat in tomato, or roast it with herbs?
Soy sauce flavored.
I LINK CHARACTERS TO PEOPLE AROUND ME ALL THE TIME.
Again? Jeez...



Thank you very much for reading until the end!

ALIVE 13

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462 ID【kaK5sj2d4g】 22:50:49
Found the crazy. Look at this page.
↓
462 ID【kaK5sj2d4g】 22:50:49
Found the crazy. Look at this page.
↓
463 ID【pU00qoa893】 02:23:38
(゜Д゜)OOF...
464 ID【opqlad93hT】 02:57:41
Cray cray
People still talk about the mass suicide?
Seems like forever ago LOL!
465 ID【iAo8d8q34a】 03:37:44
Rain-tan's a qt3.14
466 ID【opmQigm6i8】 04:55:12
Her gallery's great! You guys should check it out!
467 ID【a71aPpntt0】 05:09:32
That shit was two years ago. it's over.
468 ID【fGaoos37m4】 05:10:58
The hell does she mean by Comrades anyway?
I can fly.
Great. Fly free. Then fall
Allllll doooooone
471 ID【dfh5eRu9ie】 05:23:55
Allllll doooooone


WHAT THE HELL?! THEY'RE MAKING FUN OF ME!
I'm back.
I'M SURPRISED PEOPLE ACTUALLY READ IT.
Chapter 50
The beginning and the End
A man cannot be too careful in the choice of his enemies.


WE WANNA GET AS MANY VIEWS AS POSSIBLE TO START OUT...
CLICK
...SO I TRIED MAKING IT SEXIER.
Rain Detective Agency
Profile
Rain (17)
Active High School student and Independent Detective chasing after a major case!
Information
Rain's Case File
Puzzle Pieces
PhotoGallery
Blog


WHA?! NAMI CHAN?!
DID YOU FORGE THAT PHOTO, ANZU-CHAN?!
Photoshop...?
UH-HUH ...
RAIN
HANG ON! I'M RAIN, ANYWAY!
I-IF YOU WANT ME TO STRIP, THEN...
YOUNG GIRLS MAKE FOR BETTER BAIT.
THAT'S RIGHT. TOO BAD, AMAMIYA-SAN.
...
TAK TAK
A-ANYWAY...
Make one for me sometime!
...THAT DOES IT FOR THE FIRST STEP!
We'll just leave it at that...


WE ACTUALLY WANTED TO GO WITH MAMA YUKIE AND THE GANG, BUT...
NO. YOU CAN'T COME.
WE'RE FULLY AWARE OF THE DANGER, BUT AFTER COMING THIS FAR...
I don't mind...
HAVE YOU FORGOT-TEN?
I AM A COMRADE, TOO.
STOPPING YOU TWO IS AS SIMPLE AS BREATHING.




...WE WERE OVER-POW-ERED.
VWEE
DON'T BE AFRAID! MAMA'S FLAT, TOO!
Whoa!
BUT...!
GWOH
BUT, YUKIE-SAN!
JUST TAKE A LOOK! THIS IS ALL DATA ON THE PEOPLE WHO DIED IN THE MASS SUICIDE TWO YEARS AGO!
THOUGH THE PUBLISHER AXED EVERY ARTICLE I PRO-POSED...
RUSTLE
AMONG THEM ARE A NUMBER OF COM-RADES!
EVEN THOUGH SO MANY PEOPLE WERE KILLED, EVERYONE IS ALREADY STARTING TO FORGET ABOUT IT!
IS IT REALLY OKAY TO LET THAT INCIDENT FADE INTO OBSCURI-TY?!
WHAT EX-ACTLY DO YOU WANT TO DO?


IN ORDER TO PREVENT ANY MORE VICTIMS...
...I WANT TO TELL EVERYONE WHAT'S GOING ON RIGHT NOW!
STILL, IT'S REALLY DAN-GEROUS.
WHY NOT POST WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE ON THE INTERNET?


AFTER THAT, I MET UP WITH ANZU AND RENTED A HOUSE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF TOWN,
WHERE WE REWROTE THE ARTICLE FROM SCRATCH.
SECURITY?
NO PROBLEM.
I'LL USE A BOTNET TO UPLOAD EVERYTHING TO THE SERVER, THEN I'LL REMOVE ANY TRACES OF ENTERING THE KERNEL.
AND I'LL USE TOR FOR EVERY NODE. IF ANYONE TRIES TO TRACE US...
THEY'LL WIND UP AT SOME OLD GUY'S HOUSE IN JOHANNESBURG OR SOMETHING.
EVEN IF THE NRO COMES AFTER US...
...I'M CONFIDENT THAT I CAN...
GIVE THEM THE SLIP.
SMIRK


TAK TAK
AS LONG AS I HAVE THE GENIUS HACKER ANZU BY MY SIDE...
...AND THE CORPO-RATE SLAVE ODA-CHAN TO BRING ME SWEETS, EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE!
OM NOM
UNEM-PLOYED
WHAT'S WITH THAT?! I'M EVEN BRINGING THINGS FOR YOU!
You were a workaholic, too!
WE CAN DO IT!
I GOT STABBED IN THE CHEST, HAD MY APART-MENT SET ON FIRE AND LOST MY JOB!
HOW COULD IT GET ANY WORSE?!
IF THEY'RE TRYING TO STOP INFO ABOUT THE HEART LEAKING BY FORCE...


CLICK
THEN I'LL JUST LAUNCH...
...MY COUNTER-ATTACK FROM HERE!


WHOOSH
SWOOSH
GOHN
GOHN



GOHN
YEAH, IT'S ME! MCPHERSON?!
WHY AREN'T YOU HERE?!
GOHN
I'M ALL THE WAY OUT HERE AT THE SCENE OF THE CARRIER EXPLO-SION, YOU KNOW!
IS IT HOT?
FLAP FLAP
GOHN
YOU BET YOUR ASS IT'S HOT!
WE'RE RIGHT NEXT TO THE EQUATOR!
You cheeky bastard!
GOHN
WE'RE USING THE SEARCH FOR LOST CARGO AS A COVER,
BUT WITH THIS MUCH OUT IN THE OPEN SEARCHING FOR THE HEART IS HARDLY A SECRET!
BAM


IDIOT... THE DEPTHS THERE REACH OVER 10,000 METERS.
OF COURSE YOU WON'T FIND IT THAT EASILY.
NOT TO MENTION THE HEART...
...HAS COMPLETELY DISAPPEARED INTO THE DARKNESS!
GEH
Idiot?!
ARE YOU EVEN TRYING TO FIND THIS THING?!
THAT'S WHY I'M HERE. TCH...
BOOP
!
BASTARD CLICKED HIS TONGUE AT ME AGAIN...
GOHN
BEEP BOOP BAB BAB
MCPHERSOOON!
THE NUMBER YOU ARE TRYING TO CALL IS NOT REACHABLE AT THIS TIME...
GOHN


SO THIS IS WHERE THE COMRADE...
...WHO BEARS A FRAGMENT OF THE HEART IS, HUH?


"THE POET,"
DAN FRIEDKIN.


YOU WANT TO MEET THE POET?!
HORNER, HUH...?
Sorry.
WHO THE HELL TOLD YOU ABOUT...
WELL, WHATEV-ER. LET'S TALK INSIDE.
?


YOU WERE MCPHERSON'S SUPERIOR, SENATOR?
IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO.
I'M JUST A CIVILIAN NOW.
I'M SORRY ABOUT THIS, MAJOR GEN-ERAL.
I COULD HARDLY CALL HIM A GOOD SUBORDINATE,
BUT HIS DECI-SION MAKING ON THE SCENE WAS UNPARALLELED.
SO,
DO YOU ABSOLUTE-LY HAVE TO MEET...
...THE COMRADE WITH A FRAG-MENT OF THE HEART?


YES.
...!
?!
...
HE APPEARED SHORTLY AFTER THE FIRST MASS SUICIDE TWO YEARS AGO.
HE ASKED US TO HIDE HIM FROM THE "GHOST" THAT WOULD BE BORN SOON.
RUSTLE



THE GHOST?
WHO'S THAT?
WITH THE APPEARANCE OF THE POET,
WE LEARNED ABOUT THE COM-RADES AND THEIR CONNECTION TO THE MASS SUICIDES,
AS WELL AS ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF THE HEART.
TO BE HONEST...
...IT FILLS ME WITH GRIEF TO SEE THE DIRECTION THIS COUNTRY IS HEADED.
SKRIT
SKRIT
THE ONES WE SHOULD VALUE ARE THOSE WHO CAN TAKE ACTION AND GET RESULTS.
YOU'RE THE KIND OF MAN WHO CAN DO THAT, SER-GEANT.


YOU HAVE MY PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW THE POET.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH,
SIR.


ARE YOU SURE ABOUT THIS, SENATOR?
THAT MCPHER-SON MAN...
THAT'S RIGHT.
HOWEVER,
HE WAS DIS-CHARGED FROM THE MILITARY....
AFTER ONE OF HIS SUBORDINATES WENT BERSERK AND KILLED MULTIPLE MEMBERS OF HIS UNIT.
THE SUBOR-DINATE THAT WENT MAD...
...WAS A COMRADE.


TWO YEARS AGO...
IN THE MIDDLE OF A FIREFIGHT, A MEMBER OF HIS UNIT SUDDENLY CAME INTO THE POSSESSION OF A MYSTERIOUS POWER.
PAH
PAH
PAH
PAH
PAH
PAH
PAH
THE SOLDIER WENT ON A RAM-PAGE AND KILLED HIS COMPATRI-OTS ONE AFTER ANOTHER.
AND MCPHERSON STOPPED HIM.


THE EXISTENCE OF THE COMRADES STILL WASN'T KNOWN AT THE TIME.
UNTIL THE POET APPEARED, MCPHERSON WAS PENNED UP IN A CELL.
I TOOK HIM IN.
THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO IT.


A PRIVATE ARMY?
THAT'S RIGHT.
HE'S USEFUL.
AND RIGHT NOW, WE NEED A LEAD THAT WILL TAKE US TO THE HEART.
OUR COUNTRY HAS HIT A DEAD END.
IF WE OBTAIN THE HEART AND A NEW MEANS OF LIVING, THE COUNTRY WILL CHANGE.
IT WILL PUT AN END TO THE ERA OF MONETIZED WARFARE.


EVERYTHING IS FOR THE PURSUIT OF PROSPERITY...
RATTLE
ガラガラ
RATTLE
BEEP
BEEP
KERCHACK
TALK ABOUT TIGHT SECURITY...


IT'S LIKE WE'RE VISITING A PRISON.
THIS PLACE IS RUN BY THE MILITARY, AFTER ALL.
MEMBERS OF CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS MIGHT BE IMPRISONED HERE, BUT INSIDE IT'S THE SAFEST PLACE ON EARTH!
M-
THAT'S LIKELY WHY THE POET CHOSE THIS PLACE.
MIND IF I STAY HERE?


D3?
I'M NOT FEELIN' SO HOT. KINDA SLUGGISH...
I'VE HEARD EVERYTHING FROM THE SENATOR.
FOLLOW ME, PLEASE.
SFC MCPHERSON?
ONLY WOMEN ARE PERMITTED TO SEE THE POET.
IF A MAN COMES, HE GETS SCARED AND REFUSES TO TALK.
REALLY?!
I ASK THAT YOU MONITOR THE INTERVIEW FROM THE ROOM OVER.


PARDON ME,
BUT YOU'LL INTIMIDATE HIM IF YOU WEAR MILITARY APPAREL INSIDE.
PLEASE CHANGE IN HERE.
キィ
CREAK
YOU DO INTEND TO MEET HIM, DON'T YOU?
OKAY...
?
バタン
SHUT
NO DUDES ALLOWED? THE KID'S JUST PRECOCIOUS, ISN'T HE?
ほっ…
SIGH


AH-HA-HA! YOU LOOK ADORABLE, D4!
LIKE A KID AT A CARNIVAL!
CLAP CLAP CLAP
CLAP CLA
RIGHT, CAP?
D-DO I LOOK ALL RIGHT?
Her first errand!
SNICKER
SNICKER
She's dressing up like mommy!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT. I'LL GIVE YOU ORDERS FROM THE OTHER ROOM.
UNDERSTOOD! I'M GOING IN!
FWIP
AH-HA-HA-HA-HA! SHE CAN'T EVEN WALK STRAIGHT!
LOOK, CAPTAIN!
SLUMP
SLUMP


PHEW
KNOCK KNOCK
TWITCH
CREAK
H-HELLO, THERE.
SHUT


CLACK
TAK
SLUMP
TWITCH
THE POET KID SURE IS JITTERY...



AND D4 LOOKS SO CUTE, TOO...
YOU'RE SURE HE ISN'T DAN-GEROUS?
YES.
WE KEEP HIM UNDER CONSTANT WATCH SEEING AS HE IS A COMRADE, BUT WE HAVEN'T HAD A PROBLEM YET.
WELL, OTHER THAN...
...HE TENDS TO TALK TOO MUCH WHEN HE DOES.
YUP.
?

CREAK
CLUNK
P-PARDON ME...
I'M HERE TODAY BECAUSE I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU ABOUT ACRO'S HEART.
MUMBLE
MUMBLE
SOUND...
NOISE ...
I HEARD A LOUD NOISE.
TWELVE MEN...FIVE...
SOME TALL, OTHERS SHORT. BOOMING VOICE...


FOOTPRINTS TRACE THE FLOOR IN A BLACK PAT-TERN.
MOMMY WRAPS HER ARMS AROUND ME TIGHTLY.
IT HURTS.
IT HURTS. IT HURTS!
MOMMY IS CRYING...
WHERE'S DADDY?
DADDY IS...


DADDY IS ON TOP OF THE RUG...
POOR GIRL...
POOR EMMA...


WAHH!
STOP IT!


D4!
STOP IT, D4.
HUFF
HUFF


HER PAST TRAUMA.
THE POET SAW IT.
WH-WHAT'S WITH D4?
WHO'S EMMA...?
COMRADES WHO BEAR A FRAGMENT OF THE HEART...
...HAVE THE ABILITY TO SEE INTO PEOPLE'S HEARTS.
THAT'S ENOUGH, D4. COME ON BACK.
DAMN IT! WHAT A TROUBLESOME POWER!
D4!
CLATTER


I DON'T CARE, I'M GOING!
W-WAIT! YOU'LL AGITATE HIM!
HEY, CAPTAIN...
?!
EMMA!
EMMA ALREADY MET THEM!
H-HERE...
SUKE
EGUMI
THOSE WHOM THE HEART SEEKS.
ITS FRIENDS...
EMMA MET THEM...

TAISUKE KANOU.
KANO TAISUKE
EMMA MET THIS MAN...
HIROSE...
...WANTS TO SEE THESE TWO.
NO... ALONE IS BEST.
ALONE... ALONE...
CHAOS... CHAOS...
EMMA SHOULD BRING THESE TWO TO HIM.
SHE'LL BE ABLE TO MEET THE HEART...


THE BEGINNING AND THE END IS COMING...
KANO TAISUKE
OCHIAI MEGU
KATSUMATA-SAN, IT'S ME. DID YOU GET MY LETTER?


OH, IS THAT YOU, HAN?
YOUR VOICE CHANG-ES A LOT.
THANK YOU FOR THE LET-TER.
IT SEEMS THE MILITARY HAS NARROWED IT DOWN TO THESE CHILDREN. GOOD WORK.
KANO TAISUKE
OCHIAI MEGUM
YEAH. APPARENTLY THE FRAGMENT HOLD-ER IS ACTING AS AN INFORMATION SOURCE FOR THE MILITARY, AND HIS HINTS ARE AS CLEAR AS THEY GET!
FROM THE NAMES ON THE WALL, THEY DECIDED TO SEARCH JAPANESE RECORDS...
AND THE MILITARY MANAGED TO TRACK DOWN THESE THREE!
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE MASS SUICIDE CONUNDRUM, ALL THREE OF THEM WENT MISSING AT ONCE.
THEY WERE SOMEWHAT FAMOUS IN JAPAN FOR A TIME.



THEY EVEN FOUND OUT THAT TAISUKE KANOU HAS ENTERED THE COUNTRY UNDER A FAKE NAME.
THEY'VE DECIDED TO LOOK FOR HIM FIRST.
I SEE. WELL DONE, HAN.
I TELL YOU, I WAS SCARED HALF TO DEATH THERE FOR A BIT!
I WAS ALMOST OUTED AS A COMRADE WHEN WE WENT TO SEE THE FRAGMENT HOLDER.
INDEED. EVEN THOUGH YOU BORROW OTH-ERS' BODIES, YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN SEEN THROUGH IN A MOMENT.
ALL RIGHT. CONTACT ME AGAIN IF THERE'S A DEVEL-OPMENT.
SURE THING!


THIS ISN'T GOOD.
RUB RUB
WE NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT OCHIAI-SAN FALLING INTO THE MILITARY'S HANDS,
Heart-broken?
I'm just cutting onions!
BUT THE REAL PROBLEM IS KANOU-KUN.
THK THK THK
THE MILITARY WILL SEARCH FOR HIM IN A FRENZY.


BEFORE THEY GET THE INITIATIVE ON US...
...WE MUST DISPOSE OF HIM OURSELVES.
To be continued in Volume 14